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Information Technology for
Galveston County, Texas



SAVING MONEY BY SAVING TIME

Galveston County, Texas, Information Technology Department simplifies support by switching to Gateway E-4300 desktops.

Standardization saves money. That is the lesson Michael Crumpton, assistant IT director for Galveston County, Texas, learned when the county switched all its systems to Gateway desktops in 2004.

GETTING CONSISTENT

When Crumpton began working for the county, its technology landscape was a mess of young and old brand-name PCs and generic “white boxes” with no services attached.

“We had a hodgepodge of computers that were different manufacturers, different platforms, different levels of processing — even different operating system levels,” Crumpton said.

To deal with computer problems in county departments, the IT Department’s Help Desk and Desktop Support technicians had to walk employees through a series of questions to determine which operating system and computing platform they were using. This meant Crumpton’s staff, which supports more than 700 PCs used by approximately 1,200 users, needed knowledge of the numerous hardware and software combinations in use.

Standardizing on Gateway E-4300 enterprise platform desktops, with Intel® Pentium® 4 Processors with HT technology¹, changed that.

“Now we have a consistent platform, so when we get the call, we know, ‘You’re in this operating system. You’re on this platform,’ and we can go directly to the user issue instead of asking, ‘What’s the environment you’re working in?’” Crumpton said.

Standardizing on Gateway also simplified the software shopping process for Crumpton’s staff. Gone are the rude surprises, such as learning the county can’t use a piece of software, because it won’t operate in some employees’ computers. There is now one standard computing environment in the county. Crumpton said he looks forward to an easier time providing software applications for the county’s justice and law enforcement employees, who make up most of the work force the IT department serves.

The cost of replacing more than 700 desktops intimidated the IT department until it realized the county spent large amounts anyway for part replacements, service costs and loss of productivity from employees waiting for system repairs, he said.

“That enabled us to say, ‘We can deploy these new computers, and the resulting productivity increases and reduced operating costs will more than justify the expense and resources required to do this,’” said Crumpton.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

AGENCY:

Galveston County, Texas, Information Technology Department

MISSION:

The IT Department provides rapid and efficient support to all county employees who rely on IT to best provide services to citizens.

TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:

Remove computer support obstacles that delay county employees from doing their jobs.

GATEWAY SOLUTION:

Galveston County standardized on Gateway E-4300 desktops, simplifying and accelerating its repair process.

ROI:

The county saved money, quickened its user support process and increased productivity.

“The department heads in particular appreciate the fact that their employees are able to do their work without complaining that their computer’s down or they can’t read the screen.”

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The county used a competitive bidding process and devised a set of PC specifications and standards that covered everything from the equipment to the services provided — both in the deployment and installation phases — and support services for afterward, including staff training once the machines were delivered.

“Gateway came out the leader,” Crumpton said, adding that other providers did not match the full package of services Gateway offered. Like many other jurisdictions that choose Gateway, quality of service was a high priority to Galveston County, he said.

SUPERIOR SUPPORT

Before switching to Gateway, many of the county’s inexpensive white box PCs didn’t come with their own technical support. For these, Crumpton said the county used its Desktop Support team to fix broken machines in a matter of days. Now, the Desktop Support team immediately replaces the broken machine with a spare one provided with the Gateway contract. The county’s technicians repair the broken machines with parts shipped overnight from Gateway. Some of the name-brand machines came with satisfactory support, he said, but none provided the services Gateway does.

“As far as the service response time, Gateway exceeded the contract requirements for providing parts and doing service for us,” Crumpton said. “Gateway has a program where they certified my on-site staff to do many of the repairs and replacements, and we can just ship parts back and forth.”

Crumpton said Gateway’s service technicians rapidly deliver any needed part and often help his staff with the repairs — sometimes even doing the repairs for them.

And Gateway’s staging and imaging service cuts time spent setting up new computers, he said. The county’s system configurations were sent to Gateway on a disk to be burned onto each computer at the manufacturing stage so the desktops arrive loaded and ready to deploy.

“They provide services on delivery to help take the machines to the users’ desks, replace the old machines and remove them from the user community, so we’re able to very quickly make the switchover,” Crumpton said.

Galveston County also uses Gateway’s asset tagging service. The company tags each piece of equipment and enters its serial number and configuration information for the county’s inventory control system, saving county employees from having to gather the data after installation.



Galveston County standardized on Gateway E-4300 desktop PCs with Intel® Pentium® 4 Processors¹ 521 with HT Technology to serve citizens better.

The county negotiated a long-term lease, which included a full warranty for replacing equipment, call-in support services and training for county technicians that enables them to speak the “language” needed to efficiently collaborate with Gateway support experts. Crumpton said Gateway’s call-in support staff understands how to assist his professional computer technicians, unlike past companies that forced them to answer questions typically reserved for amateurs before resolving a problem.

With more than 700 desktops standardized on one brand, Crumpton knew the provider he chose had to believe in regular communication between his office and that company. He said Gateway’s representatives do an excellent job keeping track of his account.

“They come by periodically and make sure we are happy with our service. And if there are any issues internally at Gateway, they take them back and make sure they are addressed,” he said.

The county’s new equipment fostered an atmosphere of prestige among its employees, said Crumpton.

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